

voting aye.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Senator Marsh voting yes.

SENATOR MARSH: Have you all voted? The Clerk will record.

ASSISTANT CLERK: 26 ayes, 0 nays on the committee amendments as amended.

SENATOR MARSH: The committee amendments are adopted as amended. Senator Smith.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Madam Chairperson, members, LB 61 like LB 209 which is a companion bill which I brought to you before and is on Select File at this time is a bill that deals with the survival of our hospitals, urban and rural alike. LB 61 would help public hospitals compete effectively and equally in an increasingly competitive market for health care services. The bill would allow public hospitals defined as those that are owned by political subdivisions such as city, county and regional hospitals to join or otherwise cooperate with other health care providers to share services and agree with other cooperative or joint ventures, to join associations to benefit the hospital, to enter into partnerships and create or merge with corporations and to offer products and services developed by the venture to the public. The bill would also allow such ventures and the sponsoring public entities to develop market strategies and strategic plans. The bill came at the request originally to us from Chase, Dundy and Perkins Counties Hospitals. These hospitals wish to form an agreement in cooperation with the Ogallala Community Hospital which is a nonprofit private hospital to buy needed and share that equipment. We've been told by those folks out there that cost cutting and providing services not now available are the benefits that they feel that they will receive from LB 61. Okay, I guess basically all I need to tell you now is something that Senator Wesely already mentioned earlier and that is that according to an opinion by the Attorney General any agreements, obligations or expenditures authorized under the bill shall be exclusively an obligation of the hospital and shall not create an obligation or debt to the state or any political subdivision. The full faith and credit of the state or other political entity shall not be pledged for payment or any obligation undertaken by the hospital. Expenditures